

# **University Committee on Animal Resources**

**Adopted by the University Committee on Animal Resource on March 15, 2023**

## **SUBJECT: USE OF GUILLOTINES AND SURGICAL SCISSORS FOR USE IN**

### **EUTHANASIA**

#### **A. PURPOSE**

The purpose of this policy is to ensure that appropriate cutting equipment used for decapitations are kept in clean and sharp working order. The action should be smooth with no perceptible binding or resistance. The blades must be rust-free, be sharp, able to decapitate with minimal force, and the blades maintain contact when crossing each other. Surgical scissors may be used for smaller animals (e.g., young mice, and preweanling rats), but must be designed for that purpose and able to cleanly and quickly decapitate the head in a single cut. The AVMA Guidelines on Euthanasia requires a written plan for the proper use and maintenance of guillotines in order to assure humane euthanasia.

If animals are decapitated while still conscious, it should only be done for scientifically justified purposes. The personnel performing decapitations without prior sedations must be properly trained and have sufficient experience with decapitations prior to euthanizing animals in this manner

#### **B. APPLICABILITY**

The contents of this SOP apply to all personnel at the University of Rochester who use guillotines.

#### **C. GENERAL INFORMATION**

As with any laboratory equipment in contact with animals, guillotines can act as fomites (i.e. source of transmission of infectious agents between animals) therefore, movement of guillotines/scissors from one room to another is discouraged. If you need to transfer the equipment to a different animal facility room or lab, the equipment should be sanitized with an Animal Resource approved disinfectant before moving and after replacing it in the original room. Contact the Animal Resource Office at X5-2651 for more information if necessary.

Anyone using the equipment for decapitations is responsible for ensuring it is clean, sharp and in good condition prior to its use, or report it to the principal investigator for sharpening or repair.

#### **D. MAINTENANCE**

The principal investigator or technical staff will ensure that the equipment used for decapitation is sharp at all times. Frequency of sharpening or replacing the blades will depend on the frequency of use. Depending on species involved and volume of use, investigators may need to have the blades sharpened more or less frequently. (Tip: You can evaluate sharpness by the ease to which a thick rubber band is cut).

These guidelines must be followed unless a scientifically based exemption is requested and approved by UCAR.

Consider having a second guillotine or pair of scissors as a back-up while the first blade is out for service or plan to euthanize animals by another method described in the approved UCAR protocol during this time.

Equipment must be adequately sanitized prior to submitting it service.

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